



U9 Training Program

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UNDER 9's COACHING STRATEGY SEASON 2014-2015

Introduction

1. This coaching strategy is a start point for the U9's for the 2014-2015 season. It proposes goals we as the U9's will want to set and achieve. It is a living document and will give us a structure for the early part of the season. We will plan the season in training blocks that will allow us to focus our efforts on areas that need development either for individuals or for the team. The first block includes the first festival at Wooton Bassett; the next block will then focus on development until Christmas 2014, then Easter 2015 and then finally the Bath Festival 2015. Below I have suggested 4 broad goals for the season. I have not stated "winning such and such a festival". My reason is simple, if we get the basics right then the results will come. We must focus on developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes to play the game (process and performance), not on match results¹.

Proposed goals

2. Our goals:
- Introduce the players to contact **safely**.
 - Attitudes - maintain the enjoyment of the game and the rugby values.
 - Inclusive - all players will have equal opportunities to play.
 - Develop individual and team knowledge and skills.

What to coach and how

3. Below in Table 1, I have noted areas that we should focus on in the lead up to the first festival (Royal Wooton Bassett) on 5th Oct 14 . These have been taken from the New Rules of Rugby for U9's² which focus on 6 areas:

- Run and pass accurately and consistently.
- Run and catch.
- Track an opponent.
- Advance on an opponent.
- Grasp an opponent to make them pass ('grasp' is below arm pits for 3 secs, opponent must be allowed to pass, no competition for the ball by defender).
- Run and tackle (side and rear).

4. I have analysed the skills above and put those into the context of a game. This identified the detailed skills that we need to focus on in our initial coaching strategy. Once we have had our first festival we can use that to identify the areas we need to improve, both individually and as a team, before we prepare for the next festival. This will be an ongoing process throughout the season.

¹. Underpinning this strategy is Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning; we are passing on rugby knowledge, skills and attitudes; helping our players to understand before applying them in a game situation. The higher level learning of analysis, integration and evaluation are areas that we, as coaches will help our players understand by looking at their performances (individually and as a team) and then feeding back to them via the coaching process. Through this, we can unlock their potential and maximise their performances.

². <http://www.rfu.com/managingrugby/newrulesofplay>.



Table 1: What to coach

Ser	Individual Skills	Team Skills	Remarks
1	Tackle safely: Explain the process of the tackle (side and rear): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the Tower of Power (ToP). Perform safely a side and rear tackle through the progressions (kneel, squat, stand, walk, jog). Perform a safe tackle in a game situation (Eyes on thighs, cheek to cheek, ring of steel, drive the legs). 	Defend: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance on an opponent. Track an opponent. Grasp an opponent to make them pass. Understand and demonstrate a correct tackle (side and rear). 	Players: understand the importance of communication and leading the defence.
2	Tackler quickly onto their feet so they can help form the defensive line.	Form a defensive line and pressure the opposition by moving forward as a line.	Principles of Defence ³ : Contest Possession. Go Forward. Apply Pressure. Prevent Territory Gain. Support. Regain Possession. Counter Attack.
3	Offload prior to the tackle or pass the ball from the tackled player to another team member.	Re-align the attacking line quickly.	Continuity of attack.
4	Develop ball retention skills at the tackle. (Ball in two hands, on the chest and then passed or presented quickly).	Securing the ball and re-align the attacking line quickly.	Ball quickly away from tackle.
5	Run with the ball and pass, identify a supporting player; be a supporting player running and catching a pass.	Running, passing and catching, linking players to exploit space.	Principles of Attack ⁴ : Gain Possession of Ball. Go Forward. Provide Support. Continuity. Apply Pressure. Score points.
6	Evade a defender – avoid contact look for space either side of the defender (Space not the Face).	Find space and run into it as part of an attacking line.	
7	Understanding positions, how they are aligned and how to be a supporting player.	Support running as an attacking line.	
8	Recognise and encourage creativity from players.	Play as a team, supporting each other.	
9	Take the tackle on your terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable and strong position (ToP). Protect the ball. Go to ground safely (legs, hip, side). 		

5. By focussing on each of the areas in Table 1 above, within the sessions we have available, we can create the session programmes with each of the coaches playing a role. It will be an efficient use of time and allow us to ‘bubby coach’, but also allow us to develop knowledge and skills within the context of a game. In the time available we will end up with a set of structured coaching sessions that we can create before the season starts as listed in Table 2 below. The sessions are designed to be

³. <http://www.irbcoaching.com/page=162>.

⁴. <http://www.irbcoaching.com/page=162>.



full, so that we can refine exactly what we want to focus on depending on numbers. The initial coaching programme would be:

Table 2: Initial coaching programme

Date	Activity	Remarks
31 Aug 14	Registration and training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration & New Rules Brief. • Game: Touch rugby – looking for space (attacking). • Skill: The tackle – Tower of Power revision, then side tackle (kneeling, stand, walk and jog). • Skill: Presentation of the ball. • Game play with tackling (focus: safe tackles). 	Each player will be registered and profiled, so that we can track who has been taught what skills. No tackle training = No contact game play.
7 Sep 14	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game: Touch rugby – looking for space (attacking). • Skill: The tackle – Tower of Power revision, rear tackle (kneeling, stand, walk and jog). • Skill: Presentation of the ball. • Game play with tackling (focus: safe tackles). 	
14 Sep 14	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game: Touch rugby – closing space (defending). • Skill: Continuity and Support Runners. • Game play with tackling (focus: safe tackles). 	
21 Sep 14	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game: Touch rugby – closing space (defending). • Skill: Continuity, moving the ball away from the tackle area (attack). • Game play with tackling (focus: safe tackles). 	
28 Sep 14	Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Game: Touch rugby – defending & attacking • Skill: defence, tracking, advancing and alignment • Game play with tackling (focus: safe tackles). 	

6. A typical coaching session will look very much like our current sessions that run from approximately 1000-1145 hrs as shown at Table 3 below. We can be a bit flexible on timings but the structure of the sessions should be set. The key aspect is to do a group activity, then individual skills and then finish off with another group activity within a game context (Whole/Part/Whole). When we are doing group/game play we can pull out individuals/small groups; to work on a specific aspect of their game or a skill. I have attached a detailed coaching session at Annex A, which I think is the level we should strive for.



Table 3 - The generic coaching session

Ser	Activity	Timings	Remarks
1	Warm up – group activity. Coach led warm up ⁵ .	10-15 mins	Coaches briefed on session to confirm roles, but the session will be emailed out in the week prior.
2	Game & Skills training – individual and group activity.	35 mins	Whole – Part – Whole: Developing knowledge and skills; skills training can be a round robin depending on numbers etc.
3	Water Break.	5 mins	
4	Game play – group activity that confirms that the players have understood the skills coaching.	35 mins	Whole – Part – Whole: Allows the players to put the knowledge and skill they have learnt into a game situation.
5	Water Break.	5 mins	
6	Group activity – Bulldog (grasp tackles only)	10 mins	Because it's fun.
7	Presentations, admin points and a look forward.	10 mins	Rewards the players, involves the parents and keeps communication channels open.

Liaison

7. As coaches we have a responsibility to look forward to older age groups but also to help those age groups following on behind. As coaches we should establish a role of a liaison coach who can interact with those coaches moving into the U8's group and the U10's. The aim would be to pass on lessons and best practise we learnt whilst coaching U8's to those about to be in that age group; but also to draw on the experience of those in the U10's in the same manner. This would ensure we are not re-learning a lesson already learnt and that we are helping and supporting those other age groups who are following us.

Our roles and action plan

⁵. The players are not qualified to take a warm up, we should oversee this. A warm up will be essential when doing contact. If an injury happens then we must be able to show parents that we took all reasonable precautions to prevent it and that we are appropriately qualified.



8. As coaches we need to model the values of rugby (Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship); it will rub off on the players and has had a positive impact already. If the coaches demonstrate a skill or drill then it must be a good demo, it must show the players what 'good looks like' and should be rehearsed. Poor demonstrations undermine credibility. We should all enjoy what we do, and promote the enjoyment of the game; it may be an idea to visit a Premiership Match as a group, so that our players can see professionals play.

9. Steve and I will create the coaching sessions. Sessions can be emailed out the week prior to the training. That way each of us can prepare. Prior to the session starting; the coaches will need to meet, confirm the training and who is doing what, set up and then start. During the session coaches will make notes on the skills the players have displayed and then record them on the player profiles. That way we have a record of the players' skill sets. If a player does miss out on something we can look back to ensure everyone has had the right level of coaching. After the session has ended (this can be done by email) we need to have a feedback loop from the coaches that reviews the session (Plan, Do, Review).

Summary

10. As stated earlier this is a living document that will change as we progress. We want the players to enjoy the game and be safe whilst training and playing. This framework gives us a base on which to build a group of players that are committed to playing and having fun.

PLAYER PROFILE RECORD SRFC U9's

Player's Name:.....

Training Objective (Skill)	Standard ⁶	Standard Achieved ⁷	Coach Sign Off	Remarks
Demonstrate the Tower of Power	Players explain and demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feet shoulder width apart • On the balls of the feet • Heels just off the ground • Knees Flexed • Hips rotated back - flat back • Core engaged • Bend at the waist 90 degrees • Chest up • Shoulder blades back • Elbows in (rotate the fists inwards) • Neck in a neutral position 			
Grasp an opponent to make them pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grasp is below arm pits for 3 secs • Opponent must be allowed to pass • No competition for the ball by defender 			

⁶. Standard: defined as 'agreed level of attainment', in these cases coaches expect to see the skill performed at the standard which the player was taught. (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>, 2014).

⁷. Competent: defined as 'having the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to do something successfully'. (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>, 2014).



Training Objective (Skill)	Standard ⁶	Standard Achieved ⁷	Coach Sign Off	Remarks
Run and tackle (side and rear)	<p>Tackle safely: Players explain the process of the tackle (side and rear):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eyes to thighs • Cheek to cheek • Ring of steel • Leg drive <p>Executed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kneeling • Standing • Walking • Jogging • In a game situation 			
Tackler quickly onto their feet and then form the defensive line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release the player and roll away (if on ground) • Recover from tackle by getting to feet quickly • Form a defensive line (alignment) • Pressure the opposition by going forward as a line (communicate) 			
Run and pass accurately and consistently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball in both hands • Look to where you are passing • Swing arms across the body • Pass quickly but not hard • Point where you are passing too 			
Run and catch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands out – give the passer a target • Looking to receive the ball • Calling for the pass • Catch with both hands 			
Understanding positions, alignment and supporting play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding positions • Understand how they are aligned • Understand how to be a supporting player 			
Track an opponent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify your opponent • Track them as they move • Line up to tackle them if and when they get the ball 			
Advance on an opponent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a defensive line • Go forward to increase pressure on opposition • Keep alignment – adjust as necessary • Communicate 			
Evade a defender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid contact look for space either side of the defender (Space not the Face) • Side step • Swerve 			



SALISBURY RUGBY

Training Objective (Skill)	Standard ⁶	Standard Achieved ⁷	Coach Sign Off	Remarks
Develop ball retention skills when tackled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offload prior to the tackle• Take the tackle on your terms (stable, strong position, protect the ball)• Pass the ball from when tackled standing upright• Pass or place the ball from when tackled on the ground• Ball in two hands• Ball on the chest• Passed or presented quickly			
Take the tackle on your terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stable position• Strong position• Protect the ball• Go to ground safely (legs, hip, side)			